

the Senate too, the power which belongs to her numbers. And how was she to get it? Was there any mode of obtaining the consummation of her wishes except by a change of the Constitution in the manner prescribed?

Is there any authority above the Constitution? Sir, there is a deep meaning in this threat. We heard from a very high quarter not long ago, that unless the popular wish for Constitutional reform was soon gratified by the legislature, its sanction would not much longer be invoked; and during this session, we have heard the rights of the majority proclaimed to be above the Constitution. Is it the practical assertion of this doctrine, which at once strikes down the Constitution, and prostrates every right under the law of the strongest, to which the gentleman from Baltimore city looks?

Does he speak the sentiments of his constituents? If so, the counties, instead of yielding up power, should draw the rein of authority tighter. Every concession wrung from their fears, is a link in the chain, which ultimately will bind them.

Sir, this threat, and these doctrines, are alarming. They portend a storm which may overwhelm every thing valuable, every thing conservative in our institutions. I beg gentlemen from the counties to note them well, and before it is too late to adopt measures of safety and security.

Mr. President, we are told that territory is represented in the Senate, and there the small counties have a check on the larger counties and the city, sufficiently strong for their protection. Theoretically this may be true; but practically we find it is no check at all. The Senate is elected for six years, and the members of that body rarely wish, or will consent to accept, a second term. When they have reached that point, they have enjoyed all their particular constituents can give; and they turn their eyes for future advancement to the aggregate popular vote of the State, or to the vote of the Legislature. The consequence is, their effort is not to protect their particular constituents, but to conciliate that power in the State, which can alone confer on them additional honors and advancement. The territorial representation in the Senate is, therefore, not a sufficient, or rather not a reliable means of protection for the small counties. They must look to the House, which is composed of men who look for support to their particular counties alone, and whose conduct is frequently submitted to the approval of their constituents.

We have seen, Mr. President, that the safety of the smaller counties, will be greatly endangered by any material changes in the basis of representation. Now let me ask why make the change? It is not all good that they have abused their trust. No oppression is complained of. No act of legislation, injuriously affecting the interest of Baltimore or the west, has been pointed out. They have asked for no measure which had been refused. I have been an attentive observer of the debate, and in its whole course, not one accusation has been complained of. We have inflicted no hardships; we have been guilty of no oppression; on the contrary we have uniformly treated our

brethren with fraternal kindness; we have generously taxed ourselves for their benefit, and still are willing to extend to them our aid and support, in every prudent measure of improvement; yet we are asked to yield up power we have never abused and which is essential to our own protection. And why? Gentlemen assign no other reason, than what they are pleased to term, the rights of the people—the abstract right of the majority to rule! And when they have got all they claim, of what profit will it be to them? Will the resources of the west be more rapidly developed? Will the miner work with more vigor, and the husbandman of the west, gather richer harvests? Will Baltimore extend her commerce further? Will her artisans enjoy greater facilities, or her wealth more rapidly accumulate? Will there be more freedom? Will the privileges of the citizen be better secured, or the rights of property more respected, than now? No sir, no—it is not pretended!

But, sir, my friend from Carroll, (Mr. Brown,) charges, that we have no respect for the people of western Maryland. Have we not uniformly given the most substantial evidences of our respect, for our western brethren? Look at our statute books, and you will find them filled with the proofs of our respect and regard for them. How have we shown our want of respect? The gentleman says, we have not accorded to the people of the west, the same political power according to numbers, which we claim for ourselves. And pray sir, when did the gentleman perceive, there was any thing in this disrespectful to the people of the west? He did not always think so. We are standing on the platform of 1836; we are contending for the distribution of political power then determined on. And the gentleman himself had a very great agency in framing the act of that year. I believe sir, he claims to have written that act.

Mr. Brown explained. He did not claim any credit any more than for being on the committee and using all his efforts to get more Reform; and as he had said the other day, the Chairman of that committee remarked that he was the most troublesome man on the committee.

Mr. CRISFIELD continued. The gentleman at all events signed the report, and voted for the bill. But a change has now come over the spirit of his dream. We are standing where he stood; we are advocating his measures. Does our want of respect then consist in not changing with the gentleman? But this was not his only change; and must we follow him in all his changes? If our refusal to do this be disrespectful to the people of the west, why sir, I for one, am obnoxious to the gentleman's change; and I am very much inclined to think, I shall continue to sin in the same way.

Here, then, Mr. President, was sought a change in the distribution of political power, an abandonment of the principle of territorial representation under which we have lived and prospered for two centuries. It was not sought because it had been productive of any practical evil. It was not sought because the change was expected to improve and benefit any portion